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J.S. Forest Service

Westwide Avalanche Network

FEBRUARY, 1978

The weather of February in the West followed the pattern set in January-mostly mild temperatures and above normal snowfall except in the Cascades and southeast Alaska. The snowfall sweepstakes winner this month was Alyeska with a whopping 249 inches, increasing their snowpack from 76 to 168 inches. This snowfall was 83 times that at Eaglecrest! Elsewhere the snowfall was less impressive but still adequate: in the Sierra, Alpine Meadows received 109% of normal and Mammoth Mt., 171%; in the intermountain region, Alta, 119%; Bridger Bowl, 128%; Jackson, 140%; and Sun Valley, 177%; in the central and southern Rockies, Berthoud Pass, 119%; Aspen, 155%; Breckenridge, 92%; Taos, 148%; and Vail, 186%. The Cascades saw only 52 to 83% of normal snowfall for the month.

In February, 27 avalanche accidents occurred, and it was on the 10th that a series of fatal avalanches ran. On this day, a major snowstorm raged from the Sierra to the Rockies. Mammoth Mt. received 42 inches of snow on the 9th-10th, and Pine Creek Mill near Bishop, 60 inches on the 9th-11th. Near mid-day on the 10th at Twin Lakes west of Bridgeport, CA, a series of wet avalanches rained down the steep mountainsides above the lakes. One destroyed a summer home, two garages, and a pump house, all valued at roughly \$40,000. A short time later, another slide struck a pickup truck and snowplow on the road along Lower Twin Lake. The nose of plow was pushed into the lake, but the driver escaped unharmed. The pickup was swept far out into the deep, unfrozen lake, and it sunk with two men in the cab. Both drowned. Approximately 20 minutes later, another truck arrived at the scene, its passage blocked by the avalanche covering the road. One rider decided to proceed on foot. He climbed over the mound of snow and had walked only a short distance when he was struck by another avalanche. He was carried into the lake and drowned. These bizarre events were viewed by several eyewitnesses. Several days later, divers found the pickup 70 feet deep, 300 feet from shore. No bodies were found.

Also on the 10th on Red Mt. Pass, CO, a Colorado Highway Department rotary plow driver was clearing a small avalanche from the road beneath the infamous East Riverside Slide. A second, more massive slide then released, sweeping the huge rotary plow off the road and into the deep Uncompandere Gorge. A rescue was begun quickly, but probes and shovels could not penetrate the dense snow. The rotary was located the following morning, but it took 13 hours of additional digging to locate the cab, 35 feet deep. The driver had been thrown out and was buried elsewhere in the massive debris. His body will be found this spring. The replacement cost of the rotary plow is roughly \$75,000. This accident was a carbon copy of one occurring in 1970 when another CHD man was killed. In the past 15 years, five lives have been lost in avalanches on Red Mt. Pass, all at the hands of the East Riverside Slide.

The avalanche death toll thru February stands at 12. The winter's avalanche accident statistics are summarized in the table below. Avalanche Notes for March will be delayed until early May because of travel commitments.

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All Areas	2544	7451	103	44	8	12	15	4	4	2	2



ALPINE SNOW AND AVALANCHE RESEARCH PROJECT RM STATION FORT COLLINS, COLO.

FEBRUARY 1978

SUMMARY OF WEATHER AND SNOW CONDITIONS

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ALPINE SNOW AND AVALANCHE RESEARCH PROJECT RM STATION FORT COLLINS, COLO. U.S. FOREST SERVICE

FERRUARY 1978

SUMMARY OF WEATHER AND SNOW CONDITIONS

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FEBRUARY 1978

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OLF CREEK, COLO 28 47 8 12 9 12 5 2 28 0 0 28 0 0 8 1 0 20 1 0 50	OLF CREEK, COLO 28 47 8 12 9 12 5 2 28 0 0 28 0 0 8 1 0 20 OLF CRK PASS US 160 3 14 14 3 14 1 0 3 0 0 3 0 0 3 3 1 3	AIL, COLO					2	e	4		0			0	2			2	Œ		
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ALPINE SNOW AND AVALANCHE RESEARCH PROJECT RM STATION FORT COLLINS, COLO.

FEBRUARY 1978

-AVALANCHE-SUMMARY

FRACTURE VERTICAL DESFERT LINE HEIGHTS TAL FEET		S-IAVA	MALTON	* A M	2 4 6 200 500 1000 ROADS	-NIMBER NUMBER FEFT NO.
NUMBER TYPE-OF AVALANCHE OF DAYS	S A SLABS		2000 3	F C A R F E S	SLLLDTTE	MOF WAREN
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TOTAL	> 4		Λ	THIS		NON
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INTERMOUNTAIN

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06	155	59	11	166	S	208	12	7
ALTA, UTAH	BIG SKY, MONT	BRIDGER ROWL . MONT	GRAND TARGHEE , IDAHO	JACKSON HOLE, WYO	SLIDE MTN. NEVADA	SNOWBIRD, UTAH	SUN VALLEY, IDAHO	TETON PASS. WYO 22

--=DATA INCOMPLETE OR MISSING GE=GREATER THAN OR EQUAL TO +=ALSO-OCCURRED-ON-OTHER-DATES-



ALPINE SNOW AND AVALANCHE RESEARCH PROJECT RM STATION FORT COLLINS, COLO.

FEBRUARY 1978

AVALANCHE SUMMARY

	TOTAL TOTAL DATES	TAL	DATE			NUMBER OF DAYS	TYPE-OF-AVALANCHE	VALANCHE	FRACTURE LINE HEIGHTE	VERTICAL DESPENT	
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Σ	MONTH WINTER	TER	S		<u>_</u> _	S			4	200 500 1000	ROADS
AREA	NO.	NO.	_	ON			NUMBER		-NUMBER-	NUMBER FEET	NO.

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-09-06-9-804-96-00
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7.3.1
ALPENTAL, WASH ALPINE MEADOWS, CAL ALYESKA, ALASKA CARSON PASS CALIF-88 CRYSTAL MTN, WASH EAGLECREST, ALASKA HEAVENLY VALLEY, CAL JUNE MOUNTAIN, CALIF KIRKWOOD MDWS, CAL MAMMOTH-MTN, CALIF MISSION RIDGE, WASH MT, BAKER, WASH MT, SHASTA, CALIF PINE CREEK MILL, CAL SQUAW VALLEY, CALIF STEVENS PASS, WASH STEVENS PASS, WASH STEVENS PASS, WASH STEVENS PASS, WASH

--=DATA INCOMPLETE OR MISSING
GE=GREATER THAN OR EQUAL TO
+=ALSO OCCURRED ON OTHER DATES